

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-11 EURE-00 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-05 /078 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 369

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2819

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: 25TH CONGRESS: BREZHNEV SPEECH

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1. SUMMARY. AS EXPECTED, BREZHNEV DOMINATED THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONGRESS WITH HIS LENGTHY, VOGOROUS AND WELL DELEIVERED CENTRAL COMMITTEE REPORT. THE REPORT SUGGESTED THAT BASIC FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES SET AT THE 23RD AND 24TH CONGRESSES REMAIN IN FORCE, AND THAT THE 25TH CONGRESS HAS BEEN CALCULATED TO IMPLEMENT THOSE POLICIES AND TO SHIFT TACTICAL EMPHASIS IN ACCORD WITH EVENTS (SUCH AS THE POOR 1975 CROP YEAR) SINCE THE 24TH CONGRESS. TACTICAL SHIFTS STRUCK US AS MORE SIGNIFICANT IN ECONOMIC POLICY THAN IN FOREIGN POLICY. OUR PRELIMINARY IMPRESSIONS OF SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH--INCLUDING FOREIGN POLICY, ECONOMICS, SOVIET SOCIETY AND THE CPSU--ARE REPORTED BY SEPARATE TELEGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

2. BREZHNEV APPEARED IN FULL CONTROL AND IN TOP FORM DURING THE FIRST DAY OF THE 25TH CONGRESS FEBRUARY 24. HE DELARED THE CONGRESS OPEN PROMPTLY AT 10:00 A.M. AND DONDUCTED THE PRO FORMA ELECTION OF THE HONORARY PRESIDUM AND OTHER CONGRESS ORGANS. SUSLOV THEN TOOK THE ROSTRUM TO INTRODUCE FOREIGN GUESTS (OF WHICH CASTRO, IN HIS DRESS UNIFORM, AND CUNHAL EVOKED THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE) AND THEN TURNED THE ROSTRUM OVER TO BREZHENV FOR DELIVERY OF THE CC REPORT. SUSLOV REMAINED IN THE CHAIR THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

3. BREZHNEV'S PERFORMANCE WAS IMPRESSIVE. HE SEEMED SOMEWHAT NERVOUS AT THE OUTSET, AND STUMBLED OVER A FEW PHRASES DURING THE REPORT, BUT SEEMED TO GAIN IN CONFIDENCE AS HE WENT ALONG. THIS WAS BY FAR THE BEST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE WE HAVE SEEN HIM GIVE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. HIS STAMINA SEEMED GOOD, HE RARELY SLURRED, AND HE DID NOT SEEM TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE. THE OVERALL IMPRESSION WAS A MAN IN GOOD HEALTH AND IN FULL COMMAND OF HIS MATERIAL. HE SPOKE INITIALLY FOR TWO HOURS (COMPLETING THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF HIS REPORT), AND AFTER A 30-MINUTE BREAK COVERED ECONOMICS IN SLIGHTLY UNDER AN HOUR AND A HALF. THE SESSION THEN ADJOURNED FOR TWO HOURS UNTIL 5:00 P.M., WHEN BREZHNEV HELD FORTH FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF ON THE CPSU AND SOVIET SOCIETY. THUS
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BREZHNEV SPOKE FOR A TOTAL OF FIVE HOURS.

4. ALL THE LEADERSHIP WAS PRESENT. WE NOTICED NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THEIR SEATING ARRANGEMENT OR ABOUT TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE POLITBURO AND SECRETARIAT MEMBERS AS BREZHNEV SPOKE.
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